

An Assessment of Electronic Library Services in Judicial Law Libraries: A Mixed-Methods Study of the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has transformed global library service paradigms, driving law libraries to transition from traditional print collections to digitally enabled environments. Despite this shift, judicial law libraries in developing nations often face structural and institutional constraints that impede digital service delivery. This study assessed the availability, utilization, user satisfaction, challenges, and optimization strategies relating to electronic library services in the Law Library of the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State, Nigeria. The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design. Quantitative data were gathered via total enumeration census targeting 35 institutional stakeholders, resulting in 27 fully completed and retrieved structured questionnaires (a 77.1% response rate). Qualitative data were captured via semi-structured key informant interviews conducted with a purposively sampled cohort of 10 professionals (4 High Court judges, 4 professional librarians, and 2 court clerks) to triangulate and deepen the statistical insights. Quantitative instruments demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.85) and were analyzed via descriptive statistics (mean scores [$\bar{X}$] and standard deviations [SD]), while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. The quantitative findings revealed that while basic electronic services, digital law reviews, and electronic legal forms were technically available and moderately utilized, the adoption of advanced electronic legal resources remained constrained by systemic challenges. Qualitative narratives confirmed that unstable internet connectivity, prohibitive database subscription costs, a deficit in localized Nigerian electronic content, and low digital literacy among senior legal practitioners severely limited the library's digital performance. User satisfaction was moderate, with participants expressing greater satisfaction with human library staff support than with the underlying technological infrastructure. The study concludes that while digital transformation initiatives have commenced, significant systemic barriers restrict optimal utilization. Recommendations include increased budgetary allocation for dedicated broadband systems, sustainable funding for commercial legal databases (e.g., LawPavilion, LexisNexis), continuous hands-on digital literacy training for legal professionals, and the implementation of an institutional judicial ICT policy.

Keywords: Electronic library services; Law libraries; Judicial libraries; Mixed-methods research; Technology Acceptance Model; Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has transformed information dissemination, evolving libraries from traditional print repositories into dynamic digital knowledge centres.

Electronic library services including electronic books, online databases, and virtual reference are now indispensable, facilitating timely, remote access to authoritative information. In the legal profession, access to accurate, current information is fundamental to judicial decision-making and the administration of justice. Law libraries occupy a strategic position, providing specialized access to statutes, case law, and legal commentaries. Consequently, integrating electronic services into these libraries is essential for improving the speed, reliability, and quality of legal research.

Globally, platforms like LexisNexis, Westlaw, and LawPavilion have revolutionized legal research. These sophisticated systems offer advanced search capabilities, remote multi-user access, and continuous real-time updates, making them integral to effective judicial services in developed nations. Conversely, in developing countries, implementation has been sluggish due to persistent infrastructural, financial, technological, and human resource constraints. Formidable challenges such as inadequate funding, unstable electricity supply, poor internet connectivity, insufficient database subscriptions, and low digital literacy force many judicial libraries to rely heavily on traditional service models. This ultimately widens the global digital divide, severely undermining the effectiveness of legal information services available to judges and practitioners.

Although Nigeria has witnessed substantial ICT growth in sectors like banking and education, digital transformation within its judicial libraries remains disproportionately slow. While some federal and university law libraries have successfully integrated digital resources, many state judicial libraries continue to suffer from inadequate technological infrastructure.

The Law Library of the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State, serves judges, legal practitioners, and court personnel. Despite recent efforts to introduce electronic services, limited empirical evidence exists regarding their actual availability, utilization patterns, and user satisfaction. Therefore, assessing the current state of these services is critical to informing policies and interventions that will strengthen legal information delivery and enhance the overall administration of justice.

Furthermore, existing literature has focused predominantly on electronic library services in academic libraries, with relatively little attention given to judicial law libraries, particularly those within Nigerian State high courts. Consequently, important gaps remain regarding the availability, utilization, challenges, and optimization of electronic library services in judicial settings. This study addresses these gaps by adopting a mixed-methods approach to generate comprehensive quantitative and qualitative evidence on electronic library services in the Law Library of the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State, thereby contributing to the growing body of knowledge on judicial librarianship and digital legal information services in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to assess electronic library services in the Law Library of the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the electronic library services available in the Law Library of the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State.
2. Determine the extent to which available electronic library services are utilized by judges and library personnel.
3. Examine users' level of satisfaction with the available electronic library services.
4. Identify the challenges affecting the effective provision and utilization of electronic library services.
5. Propose strategies for improving electronic library services in the Law Library of the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Electronic library services comprise digital information resources and services created, organized, and delivered through information and communication technologies (ICTs) to facilitate efficient access to information regardless of users' geographical location. These services include electronic books, electronic journals, Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs), institutional repositories, digital archives, electronic document delivery, virtual reference services, current awareness services, remote authentication systems, and subscription-based databases. According to Arms (2000) and Borgman (2000), the evolution of these services has transformed libraries from custodians of print collections into digital knowledge hubs that support rapid information retrieval, collaborative resource sharing, and ubiquitous access to information. More recently, Cox, Pinfield, and Rutter (2019) and Rabiou and Urhiewhu (2025) observed that advances in cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics, and discovery platforms have further enhanced electronic library services by enabling personalized information retrieval, full-text searching, interoperability, and long-term digital preservation.

Law libraries are specialized information centres established to support legal education, legal research, judicial administration, and legal practice through the provision of authoritative legal information resources (Rabiou 2025). Their collections typically include constitutions, statutes, case law, law reports, legal encyclopaedias, textbooks, journals, treaties, government gazettes, and judicial precedents. Danner (2011), Rabiou (2011) and Rabiou (2016), noted that the rapid growth of electronic publishing has expanded the role of library and information services including law libraries beyond collection development to encompass database management, digital preservation, information literacy instruction, copyright management, and research support services. Subscription-based legal databases such as LexisNexis, Westlaw, HeinOnline, and LawPavilion have become indispensable for legal research because they provide comprehensive access to legislation, judicial decisions, law reports, and scholarly publications. Furthermore, Greenleaf (2019) emphasized that the expansion of Legal Information Institutes (LIIs) has strengthened equitable access to justice by providing free public access to legislation, judicial decisions, and legal scholarship, particularly in jurisdictions where subscription-based legal databases remain financially prohibitive.

Judicial libraries differ from academic and public libraries because they directly support the administration of justice by providing timely, accurate, and authoritative legal information to judges, magistrates, court officials, legal practitioners, and researchers. Consequently, electronic library services including online legislation databases, digital case law repositories, electronic court records, institutional repositories, electronic document delivery, and virtual reference services have become indispensable for improving legal research efficiency and evidence-based judicial decision-making. Tenopir et al. (2019) argued that the successful implementation of these services depends largely on adequate ICT infrastructure, reliable internet connectivity, sustainable funding, competent personnel, supportive institutional ICT policies, and users' digital competencies. Similarly, Ani, Ngulube, and Onyancha (2015) found that inadequate funding, unstable electricity supply, poor internet connectivity, limited subscriptions to commercial legal databases, and insufficient digital literacy remain major barriers to effective electronic library service delivery in developing countries. Addressing these challenges is essential for strengthening electronic library services and improving access to legal information within judicial institutions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Fred D. Davis (1989). TAM posits that technology adoption is determined by Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use. In judicial libraries, these constructs explain users' acceptance of electronic library services, as effective ICT infrastructure, reliable internet, and digital competence enhance perceived usefulness, ease of use, and continued utilization of electronic legal resources.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies demonstrate that electronic library services have significantly improved access to legal and scholarly information by enhancing information retrieval, supporting evidence-based decision-making, and facilitating remote access to digital resources. However, their implementation and utilization vary across institutions due to differences in ICT infrastructure, funding, institutional support, staff competence, and users' digital literacy (Aina, 2004; Kumar, 2021).

In Nigeria, Omeluzor et al. (2016) examined the use of electronic information resources among law students in selected universities and found that electronic journals, online legal databases, and internet resources enhanced legal research and academic performance. Despite these benefits, utilization was constrained by poor internet connectivity, erratic power supply, inadequate ICT skills, and limited subscriptions to commercial legal databases. The authors recommended improved ICT infrastructure, continuous user education, and increased access to subscription-based legal resources.

Similarly, Ani et al. (2015) investigated electronic resource utilization in Nigerian university libraries and reported that although many libraries had acquired electronic resources, their effective utilization remained low due to inadequate ICT facilities, unstable electricity, poor internet bandwidth, and insufficient information literacy skills. The study emphasized the need for sustained funding, staff capacity building, and institutional commitment to improve electronic library service delivery.

Beyond Nigeria, Greenleaf (2019) observed that Legal Information Institutes (LIIs) have expanded free public access to legislation, judicial decisions, treaties, and legal scholarship, thereby promoting legal research and reducing dependence on expensive commercial databases. Likewise, Rahmatullah and Khair (2021) found that electronic legal databases such as LexisNexis, Westlaw, HeinOnline, and LawPavilion have transformed legal research through rapid access to case law and legislation. However, high subscription costs, inadequate ICT infrastructure, and limited user awareness continue to restrict their effective utilization in many developing countries.

Recent studies also highlight the growing influence of emerging technologies on electronic library services. Cox et al. (2019) reported that artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and intelligent discovery systems are improving information retrieval, metadata generation, and personalized library services. Similarly, Abubakar and Adetimirin (2024) noted that AI adoption in African academic libraries is enhancing digital service delivery, although successful implementation depends on sustainable funding, robust ICT infrastructure, supportive institutional policies, and continuous professional development. Collectively, these studies underscore the need for increased investment in digital infrastructure, user education, and collaborative resource-sharing initiatives to maximize the effectiveness of electronic library services, particularly within judicial libraries.

Identified Research Gap

The reviewed literature demonstrates considerable progress in understanding electronic library services within academic libraries, university law libraries, and other digital information environments. Nevertheless, empirical evidence focusing specifically on judicial law libraries attached to Nigerian state high courts remains limited. Existing studies have concentrated largely on university libraries and law schools, with comparatively little attention given to judicial libraries despite their critical role in supporting the administration of justice. Furthermore, few studies have simultaneously examined the availability, utilization, user satisfaction, implementation challenges, and optimization strategies of electronic library services within a single judicial library using a mixed-methods approach. This study addresses these gaps by providing integrated quantitative and qualitative evidence on electronic library services in the Law Library of the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State, thereby contributing context-specific insights to the growing literature on digital library services in judicial institutions.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design to examine the availability, utilization, user satisfaction, challenges, and optimization strategies of electronic library services in the Law Library of the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State, Nigeria. The design enabled the concurrent collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, with the integration of both datasets providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by corroborating statistical findings with participants' lived experiences. The study was conducted at the main Law Library of the State High Court of Justice Complex in Lokoja, Kogi State. The target population comprised 35 institutional stakeholders, including judicial officers, professional librarians, and court clerks who utilize or manage the library's electronic information resources and services. For the quantitative component, a total enumeration (census) technique was employed, whereby questionnaires were administered to all 35 eligible participants. Of these, 27 completed questionnaires were duly returned and found suitable for analysis, representing a response rate of 77.1%. For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to select 10 key informants from the study population, comprising four High Court judges (J1–J4), four professional librarians (L1–L4), and two court clerks (CC1–CC2), whose in-depth interviews provided contextual insights that complemented and enriched the quantitative findings.

The systematic distribution of both the census framework and the interview sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Institutional Classification and Sampling Matrix of the Population

S/N	Personnel Category	Target Census Population	Retrieved Survey Sample (N)	Purposive Interview Sample (n)
1	Professional Librarians	8	6	4
2	Library Assistants	10	8	0
3	ICT / Technical Staff	4	3	0
4	Court Clerks	6	5	2
5	High Court Judges	7	5	4
	Total	35	27	10

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Research Instruments

The quantitative strand utilized a highly structured tool labeled the *"Electronic Library Services Assessment Questionnaire (ELSAQ)"*. The instrument was segmented into distinct thematic matrices using checklists for hardware/service availability and 4-point Likert scales to measure utilization, constraints, and strategies. Content validity was confirmed by three senior faculty members in the Department of Library and Information Science at state and federal universities. Instrument reliability was derived by executing a field test at the Federal High Court Library in Lokoja, producing a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.85. The qualitative strand used a *Semi-Structured Key Informant Interview Guide*. The prompt framework contained open-ended questions designed to explore user perceptions of platform utility, systemic performance, day-to-day search hurdles, and institutional funding limitations.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data matrices were cleaned, coded, and analyzed using descriptive statistics via SPSS version 26. Statistical summaries were produced using simple percentages for check-lists, alongside mean scores ($\bar{X}$) and standard deviations (SD) for Likert variables. The criterion mean threshold was set at 2.50 (≥ 2.50 = Accept/High Extent; < 2.50 = Reject/Low Extent). Qualitative data were transcribed verbatim from audio

recorders and field logs. The text underwent iterative manual coding using thematic framework analysis. Extracted narrative summaries were matched with corresponding statistical blocks, providing integrated validation within the Results section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Availability of Electronic Library Services

The first objective sought to identify the specific electronic services physically or digitally accessible within the institutional law library. The empirical survey results are integrated with baseline interview feedback in Table 2.

Table 2: Availability of Electronic Library Services ($N = 27$)

S/N	Service Classification	Available	Not Available
1	Online Research Guides	✓	
2	Electronic Reference Services	✓	
3	Online Course Materials and Webinars	✓	
4	Electronic Legal Forms	✓	
5	Digital Archives & Judgment Repositories	✓	
6	Electronic Law Reviews	✓	
7	LexisNexis Commercial Database Access	✓	
8	Electronic Legal Databases (Local/International)	✓	
9	Online Legal Journals and Publications		✓
10	E-books (Core Law Textbooks)		✓
11	Electronic Document Delivery (EDD)	✓	

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

The descriptive profile in Table 2 establishes that the library maintains a baseline of digital services. Key available systems include online research guides, electronic reference systems, digital archives, and electronic law reviews, alongside commercial legal database entry via LexisNexis and Electronic Document Delivery (EDD) channels. Conversely, the library exhibits deficiencies in the localized provision of active online legal journals and standalone law e-books, forcing users to rely on external open-access legal aggregators.

Qualitative interview:

This quantitative baseline was corroborated during interviews with the library staff. Librarian L2 explained the availability gap regarding electronic books and current journals:

"We have systematically indexed our old law reports and we provide functional access links to external legal search tools, but our internal repository lacks dedicated subscriptions to updated international legal journals and e-textbooks. Budgetary ceilings prevent us from purchasing direct licenses for core electronic textbooks, which forces us to rely heavily on open-source material."

Extent of Electronic Library Services Utilization

The second objective examined how frequently available digital platforms were used by legal professionals and library operatives. The metric utilized a 4-point scale: Very High Extent (VHE = 4), High Extent (HE = 3), Low Extent (LE = 2), and Very Low Extent (VLE = 1). The findings are structured in Table 3.

Table 3: Extent of Electronic Library Service Utilization (N = 27)

S/N	Electronic Library Service	VHE (4)	HE (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Dev (SD)	Decision
1	Online Legal Journals and Publications	4	7	13	7	2.26	0.96	Reject
2	Online Course Materials and Webinars	16	7	2	2	3.37	0.93	Accept
3	Online Research Guides	10	9	3	5	2.89	1.12	Accept
4	Electronic Legal Forms	14	8	1	4	3.19	1.08	Accept
5	Electronic Reference Services	8	13	3	3	2.96	0.94	Accept
6	Electronic Law Review	13	8	2	4	3.11	1.09	Accept
7	LexisNexis Database	13	10	1	3	3.22	0.97	Accept
8	Digital Archives	10	9	3	5	2.89	1.12	Accept
9	E-law Based Journals	3	2	12	10	1.93	0.96	Reject
10	Electronic Document Delivery	13	8	2	4	3.11	1.09	Accept
11	Electronic Legal Databases	11	7	5	5	2.86	1.15	Accept

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

As shown in Table 3, available electronic legal resources are actively utilized by the respondents. The highest utilization intensity was registered for online training/webinars ($\bar{X} = 3.37, SD = 0.93$), followed by LexisNexis searches ($\bar{X} = 3.22, SD = 0.97$), and the digital processing of electronic legal forms ($\bar{X} = 3.19, SD = 1.08$). Electronic law reviews and electronic document delivery also recorded high use ($\bar{X} = 3.11$). However, sub-optimal use was observed for online legal journals ($\bar{X} = 2.26$) and specialized e-law journals ($\bar{X} = 1.93$).

Qualitative interviews:

Qualitative interviews with the judiciary clarified the reasons behind these utilization patterns. High Court Judge J1 emphasized the high value placed on digital database tools when access is available:

"I use LexisNexis and the digital judgment archives to review precedents before writing rulings. It reduces the time required to cross-reference multiple physical law volumes. However, we rarely use e-law journals because finding specific, relevant local case law in these international journals is difficult."

Court Clerk CC1 added that electronic legal forms are heavily utilized due to administrative requirements:

"The processing of court filings relies on the electronic legal forms system. We use this system daily, which explains why its utilization score is high. It makes case management much cleaner than manual tracking."

Challenges Hindering Electronic Library Services Utilization

The third objective addressed the structural, institutional, and technical challenges preventing optimal digital resource deployment. The items were scored on a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA = 4), Agree (A = 3), Disagree (D = 2), and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1). The findings are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Analytical Breakdown of Implementation Challenges (N = 27)

S/N	Challenge Statement	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Dev (SD)	Decision
1	Lack of awareness about available electronic services limits their usage.	8	10	5	4	2.81	1.04	Accept

2	Navigating electronic platforms remains challenging for some users.	14	9	3	1	3.33	0.83	Accept
3	Inadequate internet connectivity hampers effective use of electronic services.	10	14	1	2	3.19	0.83	Accept
4	Inadequate technical support impedes smooth access and troubleshooting.	10	12	2	3	3.07	0.96	Accept
5	The absence of Nigerian-specific legal content in electronic formats poses a major constraint.	16	8	1	2	3.41	0.89	Accept
6	The high cost of subscription restricts access to digital legal resources.	9	12	4	2	3.04	0.90	Accept
7	Limited digital literacy among users reduces the efficiency of service utilization.	16	8	1	2	3.41	0.89	Accept

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

The statistical indicators in Table 4 highlight the critical challenges faced by users. The most critical barriers identified by respondents were a lack of localized Nigerian-specific legal electronic materials ($\bar{X} = 3.41, SD = 0.89$) and limited digital literacy among users ($\bar{X} = 3.41, SD = 0.89$). Technical interface navigation issues were also noted as a key barrier ($\bar{X} = 3.33, SD = 0.83$), alongside poor internet connectivity ($\bar{X} = 3.19$), inadequate technical support ($\bar{X} = 3.07$), and high subscription fees ($\bar{X} = 3.04$).

Qualitative interview:

The qualitative interview responses provide direct context for these findings. High Court Judge J3 described how a lack of digital literacy combines with interface navigation issues to create user frustration:

"Many of us were trained in an entirely analog era. Searching through complex digital databases can be frustrating when the search terms do not return what you need. When the interface is confusing and we do not have regular tech training, it is easy to default back to physical law books."

Librarian L4 highlighted the underlying infrastructural issues:

"The internet service provided to the library is unstable and slow. During peak research hours, the bandwidth drops, causing connections to drop while judges are searching for case law. This is worsened by frequent power cuts, which disrupt access and risk damaging our computer systems."

Court Clerk CC2 described how the lack of localized content impacts daily operations:

"We often spend hours searching international platforms only to find they lack current Nigerian supreme court rulings or regional high court edicts. Without localized content, these systems lose much of their practical value for our daily work."

Strategies for Enhancing Service Utilization

The final objective investigated actionable strategies to resolve these digital challenges and optimize library operations. The data are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Perceived Strategies for System Optimization ($N = 27$)

S/N	Optimization Strategy	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Dev (SD)	Decision
1	Improving internet connectivity enhances utilization.	13	8	2	4	3.11	1.09	Accept
2	Lowering subscription costs increases usage.	13	10	1	3	3.22	0.97	Accept
3	Providing more training enhances service usage.	10	9	3	5	2.89	1.12	Accept
4	Increasing awareness improves utilization.	8	11	3	3	2.96	0.98	Accept
5	Simplifying the user interface makes services more accessible.	10	14	1	2	3.19	0.83	Accept
6	Offering more Nigerian-specific legal resources increases relevance.	10	12	2	3	3.07	0.96	Accept
7	Strengthening technical support improves utilization.	9	12	4	2	3.04	0.90	Accept

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

The data in Table 5 shows strong agreement on strategies to improve service utilization. The most highly supported solution was lowering subscription barriers through institutional licenses ($\bar{X} = 3.22, SD = 0.97$), followed by simplifying database interfaces to make them more accessible ($\bar{X} = 3.19, SD = 0.83$). Upgrading broadband infrastructure scored high ($\bar{X} = 3.11$), while integrating more localized legal content ($\bar{X} = 3.07$) and increasing technical support ($\bar{X} = 3.04$) were also widely accepted as vital strategies.

Qualitative interview

Interview responses reinforced these strategies, with a clear focus on hands-on training and institutional support. Judge J4 suggested:

"The judiciary must arrange regular, structured ICT training sessions tailored specifically for judges and research assistants. This training should not be a general overview; it must focus on advanced search methods for local and international case law databases."

Librarian L1 emphasized the need for a programmatic approach to platform design and content sourcing:

"We need to build partnerships with domestic legal legaltech groups like LawPavilion to secure institutional licenses. Simplifying search portals and ensuring stable, high-bandwidth internet connections will make these digital services far more reliable and easy to use."

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Availability and Utilization of Electronic Services

The mixed-methods findings demonstrate that while the Law Library of the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State, has acquired basic digital services like online research guides, LexisNexis access, and digital archives, its

total utilization pattern remains uneven. The high utilization of webinars ($\bar{X} = 3.37$) and electronic legal forms ($\bar{X} = 3.19$) indicates a positive shift toward digital workflows among users. This aligns with Akande & Omolola (2023), who noted that judicial libraries are increasingly adopting electronic services to provide timely access to legal materials. The moderate-to-high use of LexisNexis ($\bar{X} = 3.22$) shows that commercial databases are essential for cross-jurisdictional research.

However, the low utilization scores for online legal journals ($\bar{X} = 2.26$) and e-law journals ($\bar{X} = 1.93$) contrast with Greenleaf (2019), who argued that e-books and e-journals are becoming primary resources for modern legal research. This low use is linked to the lack of available core law e-books and online journals shown in Table 2, forcing users to rely on physical formats or external open-access channels. As Librarian L2 noted, limited funding restricts the library's ability to maintain direct subscriptions to core digital texts, confirming the views of Bharti and Verma (2021) regarding the financial barriers to expanding digital collections.

Challenges and Optimization Strategies

The analysis shows that a lack of localized content and limited digital literacy are the main barriers to effective service utilization ($\bar{X} = 3.41$). This supports Omeluzor et al. (2016) or Rahmatullah & Khair (2021), where they argued that while electronic resources are increasingly common, many legal professionals struggle to use them effectively due to a lack of technical skills. As Judge J3 noted during interviews, this is especially true for older practitioners trained in a pre-digital era (Mostert & Olorunfemi, 2013).

Infrastructural issues like poor internet connectivity ($\bar{X} = 3.19$) and high subscription costs ($\bar{X} = 3.04$) remain major problems. As Adenariwo (2022) pointed out, even in urban centers, inconsistent internet access severely disrupts the use of electronic library services, a challenge explicitly confirmed by Librarian L4's account of bandwidth drops and power cuts. Furthermore, financial constraints often make premium databases unaffordable for public law libraries and state judiciaries (Atanda et al., 2021; Bankole et al., 2020).

To address these challenges, respondents strongly supported lowering subscription costs through institutional licensing partnerships ($\bar{X} = 3.22$) and simplifying database user interfaces ($\bar{X} = 3.19$). This matches the recommendations of Abubakar and Yar'adua (2021), who stated that clear, simple database platforms are essential for users with limited technical experience. Finally, the study highlights that regular training and better technical support are vital to improve user confidence and ensure effective legal research within the state judiciary (Atinmo & Amusa, 2016).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study assessed electronic library services in the Law Library of the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State, Nigeria, using a mixed-methods approach. The study concludes that while the library has established a solid baseline of digital services, including access to LexisNexis, digital archives, and electronic document delivery, its overall effectiveness is limited by institutional and technical challenges.

The utilization of advanced electronic legal resources, particularly online legal journals and e-books, remains low. This underutilization is driven by poor internet connectivity, high database subscription costs, a lack of localized digital legal content, and limited digital literacy among users. While judicial officers and library staff recognize the value of these digital services, the underlying technological infrastructure requires significant investment and strategic policy support to meet the demands of modern legal research.

Recommendations

To improve the quality and use of electronic library services in the State High Court of Justice, Kogi State, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) Upgrade ICT Infrastructure: Invest in reliable broadband internet and alternative power sources to ensure uninterrupted access to electronic library services.
- 2) Provide Sustainable Funding: Allocate consistent funding for subscriptions to international and local legal databases to expand access to authoritative legal resources.
- 3) Strengthen Digital Literacy: Organize regular training programmes for judges, legal practitioners, and court staff to improve electronic legal research skills.
- 4) Enhance Local Digital Content: Collaborate with local software developers to develop user-friendly platforms with comprehensive Nigerian legal resources.
- 5) Develop an ICT Policy: Establish a comprehensive ICT policy to support digital transformation, regular equipment maintenance, and continuous staff capacity development.

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